



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT ANNOUNCES THE AVAILABILITY OF \$188 MILLION IN LOAN GUARANTEES AND GRANTS FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROJECTS**

**TEMPLE, TEXAS, February 24, 2006**— USDA Rural Development today announced the availability of almost \$188 million in loan guarantees and grants for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. The funds support the Bush Administration's objective to increase production of renewable energy from domestic sources to reduce our dependence on imported oil. USDA Rural Development has invested almost \$290 million in programs designed to encourage the development of new energy sources.

"USDA Rural Development will focus efforts to bring together agricultural producers and rural businesses to spur the development of our renewable energy options. Rural Texans have ideas and solutions that make a difference in the rural economies in which they farm, ranch and do business," said Bryan Daniel, USDA Rural Development State Director.

Section 9006 of the 2002 Farm Bill established the Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements loan and grant program to encourage agricultural producers and small rural businesses to create renewable and energy efficient systems. The funds announced today will be available to support a wide range of technologies encompassing biomass (including anaerobic digesters), geothermal, hydrogen, solar, and wind energy, as well as energy efficiency improvements.

Applications for grants must be submitted to the USDA Rural Development State Office no later than May 12, 2006. Guaranteed loan applications are due to the National Office for funding consideration by July 3, 2006, and are awarded on a continuous basis. Any guaranteed loan funds not obligated by August 1, 2006, will be made available for competitive grants. For more information refer to the announcement in the February 13, 2006 Federal Register or on the web at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/farmbill/index.html>.

USDA Rural Development strives to ensure that rural citizens can participate fully in the global economy by providing technical assistance, funding, and other programs that help rural Americans build strong economies to improve their quality of life. To learn more about the program, please call USDA Rural Development in Temple, Texas, at (254) 742-9780.

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